

**CONFIDENTIAL**

9 July 1974

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MEMORANDUM FOR: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT : Total Immersion Language Programs for FY 1975

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1. In confirmation of our telephone discussion [REDACTED] of your staff, the Language Learning Center would like to reserve [REDACTED] for total immersion language training programs as follows:

French : 24 February - 21 March  
Spanish : 7 April - 2 May  
German : 26 May - 20 June

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In the light of my own discussion with you, it is understood that [REDACTED] will be vacated immediately after lunch on the final Friday of each of the programs to permit custodial personnel to prepare the facility for the ensuing activity the following week.

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2. If these arrangements are not possible, please let me know as quickly as possible as we must begin now to integrate the scheduling of our personnel and other language programs with those of the total immersion programs at the [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
Chief, Language Learning Center**CONFIDENTIAL**

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17 December 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : "Total Immersion" Language Training Experiment

25X1A 1. On 23 October - 16 November the Language Learning Center conducted an experimental "Total Immersion" (TI) language training program for 12 students of Russian at the [REDACTED] Beyond the immediate goals of improving the language skills of the students, the larger goal of the experiment was to determine the effectiveness of such training and the feasibility of using it on a wider scale. The idea arose in response to two long-standing problems in language training: 1) the acknowledged fact that most students cannot achieve professional competence (S-3) in a language under normal classroom conditions, and 2) the difficulty posed by security considerations in using job-related language exercises for DDO officers. The need for S-3 proficiency and job-related training have been recurrent themes of LLC consumers for years.

More specifically, the experiment was intended to give us answers to the following questions:

- a. Will a month of TI training provide the missing ingredient of speaking confidence that characterizes the S-3 speaker?
- b. Can we, by compressing 300 hours of training into four weeks (instead of nine) reduce the number of weeks of training and get the same -- perhaps even better -- results?
- c. How well will students and faculty react to living under the demanding conditions of TI training (over 15 hours of teacher/student contact each day for 23 days, including two weekends)?
- d. What are the problems that are likely to arise in such training (fatigue, stress, boredom, group tensions, etc.)?
- e. What are the costs and logistical requirements?

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- f. What teaching strategies are most effective (lectures, formal grammar sessions, films, problem-solving exercises, group vs. individual activities)?
- g. What is the best student mix (males and females, DDO officers vs. non-DDO personnel, various levels of proficiency, older vs. younger students)? And the proper student/teacher ratio?
- h. Can a program of strengthening general language skills be reconciled with a curriculum to teach specific professional vocabulary (i.e., can S-2 students move up to S-3 while spending half of their training time on materials related to DDO operations)?

## 2. Description of the Program

The month was divided into two two-week segments, broken up by a weekend off at the mid-point. For the most part, the first segment was devoted to work on general language skills (grammar sessions, vocabulary building through visual aids, listening comprehension with Voice of America tapes, student oral presentations, group discussions on current events, etc.), and on learning vocabulary for the activities of the second two weeks; the second segment concentrated primarily on operations exercises. Except for a few minutes a day in the cafeteria lines in the [REDACTED] mess hall, Russian was used exclusively from 0800 until the day ended, for most students usually after midnight. Following is a schedule of a normal working day during the first two weeks:

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0900 - 0950	Grammar
1000 - 1050	Independent work on assigned reading (e.g., report by a defector on aspects of the KGB; the armed forces of the Soviet Union, etc.)
1100 - 1150	Independent work on Voice of America (current events vocabulary)
1150 - 1255	Lunch
1315 - 1345	Soviet news reels
1345 - 1415	Daily news in Russia
1415 - 1500	Group discussion of VOA

1500 - 1730 Free time

1900 - 2000 Discussion, in small groups, of  
assigned reading material

2000 Film and free conversation

In addition to formal classes of six students (for grammar) or all 12 (for lectures), students also worked in groups of three with an assigned "mentor" on vocabulary-building, reading, or listening exercises. The small-group format was a device for coping with the different needs of students of varying proficiencies. During the second two-week segment, when Russian-speaking SB officers were also available to work with students, some exercises were handled on a semi-tutorial basis. Following is a sample of the types of activities conducted during the second two weeks:

Exercises on ciphers  
Workshop on Soviet documents  
Seminar on handling an in-place agent  
Debriefing a walk-in  
Interview with a Soviet  
Debriefing an illegal  
Administering the Wechsler-Bellevue test  
Exercises on describing people and locations (slides)  
Interpreting for a psychiatric interview  
Lectures on: Communist party, KGB, Soviet Mission  
abroad, Soviet military, etc.

### 3. Faculty and Students

The original plan for staffing the Russian House was to use the Chief of the LLC Slavic/Germanic Department as Program Director and hire three native Russian speakers from the ranks of recent retirees. As it turned out, we did not have a Department Chief when the program got underway, and there were only a few qualified people among the retirees. We hired one of them (a former [REDACTED]) brought in a well-qualified independent contractor as Program Director, and rounded out the staff with a Russian-speaking Career Trainee (serving with us on interim assignment) and a member of the LLC faculty. In each of the first two weeks a native-speaker guest spent five to seven days at the house as well. During the second segment, a total of ten other guests rotated through the house for periods ranging from a few hours to the full two weeks. [REDACTED] who was designated as

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coordinator for SB's input into the course, lived in the house throughout the second two weeks. He worked closely with the Program Director on the scheduling of guest speakers and provided substantive expertise for the operations segment of the course.

Of the 12 students, ten were from the SB Division; two were from [REDACTED] (see list, Attachment A). Most were younger officers (age 24 - 35) who had been through the BOC but had not had extensive field experience. Their speaking proficiency in Russian ranged from level 1 to 3+, though most were in the S-2 range. Four of the 12 were women.

#### 4. Resources Required

Planning for such courses is complex. In the case of the pilot program, ca. eight weeks of a full-time staff employee's time were required (in coordinating with area divisions, pre-testing students, gathering materials, faculty briefings, etc.). Even if such courses became routine, pre-course planning could probably not be accomplished in less than four to six weeks. Logistical requirements, however, are not excessive: the living quarters, mess facilities and transportation capability [REDACTED] are ideal; and the [REDACTED] staff handled the requirements comfortably, even at peak season. Costs were as follows:

##### Salaries:

Program Director	\$4,357
Instructor (Independent Contractor)	2,040
Instructor (LLC faculty; includes costs for overtime hours)	1,700
Instructor (Career Trainee)	--

TOTAL SALARIES.....\$8,097

Ground Transportation	<u>161</u>
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TOTAL COSTS.....\$8,258

Not considered in the above figures are costs paid [REDACTED] as normal operating expenses (air transportation, food, general support) and salaries of students or guests. Expenses for books and training materials were negligible. For future programs, the Program Director's costs would be less, since

basic groundwork has now been completed; instructors' costs, however, would be higher, since we cannot depend on help from the CTP. Estimated cost for any such programs in the future: ca. \$11,000 - \$12,000. For comparison, the cost to OTR of training 12 students for 300 hours at the FSI would be \$12,024 (3600 hours at \$3.34 per hour).

#### 5. Problem Areas

Considering the fact that this was a first effort, that the project was ambitious and complex in design, and that the training conditions were full of unknowns, it is remarkable that it went as smoothly as it did. There were no really serious problems. Following, however, are some things to consider for the future:

a. One question we have not yet resolved is how well the improvement of general language skills can be reconciled with practicing the language in operational situations. If our goal is to produce S-3 speakers, the work on operations material only takes time that could be used on improving grammatical accuracy and building vocabulary. On the other hand, if we reduce the emphasis on operations, the program would lose in its appeal to some of the DDO Divisions (certainly to SB). In some cases S-2 speakers moved up to S-3 and thus achieved both goals; but as the course is currently laid out, there will not be many of these. We may have to make some choices; or be content that the current compromise is already a giant step ahead of what we could do before.

b. The range of entering proficiencies (S-1 to S-3+) was intentionally wide in the pilot program to see how the training would affect students at various levels. There are obvious difficulties, however, in planning activities that are productive for both beginners and strong intermediates. In any future courses, only candidates at levels S-2, S-2+ and S-3 should be considered.

c. Since the planning for a course like this is aimed at the needs of a specific group of students, it is important that the Program Director know well in advance who the target population will be. We lost some hours in false starts during the first few days because the list of students was not firm until

shortly before the course started. Some planned activities were not appropriate for the group; and some things were not included which should have been. About two months lead time is required, not only for planning, but for pre-tests, briefings and pre-course preparation for the students as well. A common theme in the student critiques was their desire for pre-course vocabulary lists and reading material.

## 6. Results

As an experiment, the pilot program was a success in almost all respects: we have answers to our questions, and the answers are encouraging.

a. TI training clearly provides the dimension of language competence which normal full-time training is unable to give: even though grammar and vocabulary gaps were still in evidence, all 12 students spoke the language with confidence and fluency when they completed training. In this respect, a month of TI training complements and completes the training that students normally get under formal classroom conditions. It seems probable that by concluding our full-time courses with a one-month TI segment, we could significantly increase the number of S-3 speakers that come out of training.

b. The compressing of 300 hours of training into four weeks (instead of nine) apparently does not adversely affect students' progress. In order to get a true reading on this, we would have to try it with a group of LLC students and compare results with former students. It appears, though, that a TI segment as the final month of a normal full-time course could save us four to five weeks of training time while producing the same or higher proficiencies.

c. Students and faculty reacted favorably to the TI environment. There is, of course, greater tolerance for hardship in a group that knows it is part of an experiment; but we saw no signs of excessive fatigue, boredom, group tension, or frustration which might have been anticipated. As a whole, the group found the experience stimulating and enjoyable rather than oppressive.

d. Although there were individual differences in what the students learned, all moved up at least a half-level in speaking, reading or listening comprehension (test scores, Attachment B). Post-tests and student/teacher evaluations showed that the course achieved its goals in improving listening comprehension, fluency and vocabulary, though it did not have a significant effect on the students' control of grammatical structure. We are not yet sure whether the course should be changed to strengthen it in this area or if the objective is incompatible with other objectives and should be played down. Since we know we can teach grammar effectively in a normal classroom, perhaps we should use the TI environment only for what it does best. The fifth general objective, familiarization with the use of Russian in operational situations, was easily accomplished during the second segment of training. Of the 20 specific terminal objectives we set for the students (Attachment C), all but three (#8, #15, #19) were fully or partially achieved.

e. Consumer response to the program was generally positive (Student Critiques attached). The Soviet Bloc Division expressed the feeling that their investment in it was well spent, particularly because of the extensive operational use of Russian in the course. They are prepared to participate in another such program next year, if one is offered. [REDACTED] was less enthusiastic because of precisely the things that made the program attractive to the DDO. The two [REDACTED] students improved their language skills, particularly in listening comprehension, but their gains were peripheral to DDI job requirements, which are chiefly for translation skills.

## 7. Conclusions

The overriding conclusion that the Language Learning Center has drawn from its experience with this type of training is that it should be pursued further. Not only does it provide a way to reduce training time and overcome the barrier between S-2 and S-3, but it brings OTR and its language consumers into a closer working partnership as well. If SB is any measure,



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participating divisions take this type of language training seriously. Moreover, because of the degree of commitment involved, they will send only the people for whom learning a language is important. Such programs appear to be an excellent and appropriate use [REDACTED] And because of the possibility of teaching operations or job-related material, this training could ultimately be one of the unique contributions of the Language Learning Center to the Agency mission.

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[REDACTED]  
Deputy Chief, Language Learning Center

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RUSSIAN HOUSEGENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To expand general vocabulary.
2. To improve fluency and confidence in speaking.
3. To improve control of structure.
4. To improve listening comprehension.
5. To familiarize the student with vocabulary and structures needed to use Russian operationally.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

At the completion of training the student should be able to:

1. Use correctly the words and phrases required to satisfy his personal needs in a Russian-speaking environment.
2. Tell time.
3. Give and understand directions to a place in some detail.
4. Comprehend and transcribe numbers of all kinds, including dates, even when given quickly or with some audio interference.
5. Describe the background of a person (including nationality, occupation, education, residences and personal interests).
6. Use correctly words and expressions needed to discuss foreign affairs and current events.
7. Identify in Russian the major political and governmental units of the USSR (including those of a typical Soviet embassy)
8. Give the names of the 15 Soviet Republics and recognize the names of the important geographic features of the USSR.
9. Arrange a meeting at a given time and place by phone; describe the place and himself; understand the same details given to him on the phone and report them to someone else.
10. Serve as an interpreter for an English-speaking psychologist administering the Wechsler-Bellevue test.

ADMINISTRATIVE - INTERNAL USE ONLY

11. Serve as an interpreter for a colleague in administering a general psychiatric interview.
12. Debrief a defector, eliciting biographic information and details about his work.
13. Handle the first half-hour of an interview with a walk-in.
14. Brief an agent regarding information he should elicit in an interview with a third party and comprehend the details of the interview in the agent's oral report.
15. Give an accurate description of a variety of people, including age, physical features, facial characteristics, and clothing.
16. Describe a variety of locations in a city, village, countryside, or building.
17. Train an agent in the use of ciphers and the operation of a simple camera.
18. Get the gist of a taped conversation at the 2-3 level with some background noise and poor fidelity.
19. Read handwritten documents, with some abbreviations and relatively poor legibility, in Russian at the 2-3 level of difficulty.
20. Comprehend in Russian a fairly detailed lecture on the background and make-up of the Soviet Communist Party and the KGB.